

PARENTAL RESPONSE TO CONCEPTS OF PARENT-
ADOLESCENT RELATIONSHIPS

by

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B. S., University of Nebraska, 1942

A THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Child Welfare and Euthenics

KANSAS STATE COLLEGE
OF AGRICULTURE AND APPLIED SCIENCE

1952

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INTRODUCTION

Modern family life appears to be making a transition from the traditional patriarchal or authoritarian form of organization to one with more democratic trends. Groves and Groves (1947) express the opinion that the progress during the last two centuries through discoveries, inventions, and the application of science has changed and is changing constantly the activities, the beliefs, the desires and the relationships of men, women and children. They further state that nothing that feels the force of the cultural current remains stationary. Just as government, business, religion, education and vocations change, so does the family.

Along with these changes have come confusion and conflict as individual families have felt the impact of the new ways of thinking and acting against the old accepted customs. To a great extent this has created tension and friction between older and younger members of families. Duvall (1947) names it a gap of thinking between generations. This gap can be bridged through mutual effort for understanding of one another's situations and problems.

The trend toward democratic families is characterized by greater companionship between parents and children with a cooperative sharing in planning and accepting responsibility. Democratic families are happy families in which parents and children work together and play together in mutual enjoyment. Poley (1945) wrote that parents are told to be themselves, to be real persons and as part of their real selves, to be, not pals or brothers or sisters, but fathers and mothers who enjoy their children and who want to cooperate in furthering their children's growth. Democratic family life may be considered to be a happy and satisfying form of family organization.

The truly democratic home is the one in which the individuality of each family member is respected; in which each family member expresses his opinion in the knowledge that it will be considered; in which there is a mutual sharing of work and play; in which all members appreciate and respect the American way and become responsible citizens, law abiding, tolerant, and freedom loving.

Folsom (1943) advances the opinion that democracy must educate people to make choices. He states:

If democracy would safeguard its own future it must greatly develop its own educational program. It must distribute interests, tasks, and skills more widely. It must make learning pleasant. It must free people from their puritan sense of guilt about their mistakes, their failures, their choices. It must teach them that they have the right to choose, to deviate as far as they can without harming others, and really to love others while differing from them. It must build a personality structure in individuals which is appropriate to a democratic society.

Education for democracy must of necessity begin in the home with democratic parents to guide and counsel. The child who grows up in an authoritarian home in which all decisions are made for him and in which he is never permitted to express his opinion has a difficult experience in a freely democratic situation. The child who grows up in a home in which there is an attitude of *laissez-faire*, in which he is permitted to follow the dictates of his own desires, also finds it difficult to adjust to a truly democratic procedure.

Duvall and Hill (1945) point out that:

The father is less of a boss even theoretically today. He is more than an earner and supplier of the good things of life. He is ideally a husband, companion and partner to his wife; a friend, guide, protector and playmate to his children. The home has become a democracy with rights of free speech for every member; allowances and joint checking accounts have become common place. In this less materialistic family set-up there is less fear, more freedom to be

oneself, increased emphasis on the enduring values of home life, on loving rearing of children, on deep companionship of shared experiences.

Symonds (1949) states that:

A good home should provide a balance between stability and uniformity on one hand and a variation and breadth of experience on the other. ... the emotional attitudes of parents toward the child are more important in giving the child security than the possession of a fine home, with cleanliness, comfort and convenience. For his emotional security the child needs parents who are stable, happy individuals, free from worry and anxiety and who have a task in life and a respected place in the community.

The question of adolescent desire to be independent of parental control becomes serious because of parental resistance. Many parents cling to their children in an apparent effort to keep them dependent. In their desire to be needed, some parents refuse to liberate the child. In discussing homes for adolescents and their attitude toward home, Cole (1948) emphasized the importance of adolescent's emancipation from home control. She called attention to the fact that:

One major objective to be reached by the end of the adolescent period is the emancipation of the boy or girl from home control. The first need, then, in a home for those of adolescent age is a wise relinquishing of the supervision necessary for children and a wise development of adequate self-control in the adolescents themselves.

Many parents find this a difficult task. For twelve or thirteen years the parents have directed the child and indirectly controlled his behavior. The shift from complete control to complete independence will not be sudden. It will be a gradual procedure but it must be completed by the time the adolescent becomes an adult.

Another aspect of adolescent development which many parents find difficult to accept is the importance which youth places upon having their behavior approved by or conform to their contemporaries. Havighurst and Taba (1949)

point out that recent studies of adolescents have emphasized the fact that boys and girls in their teens have a culture of their own with moral standards and moral pressure behind those standards. This culture has been called "adolescent peer culture". Boys and girls, desiring the approval of their age mates, follow the fashions of the peer culture in morals, dress and speech. The moral standards and practices of the adolescent peer culture are probably an important factor in character formation.

Students of family relations are interested in the understanding and acceptance by parents of the factors and forms of adolescent behavior. It is recognized that the personality of the individual is the result of the interaction of his inherent characteristics and his environmental experiences. Harmonious interrelationships are essential to the development of adequate and happy personalities. When friction is manifest, it appears to center around economic matters: size of allowance; part time jobs to supplement or take the place of the allowance; the adolescent's share of the family income. Social matters: number of dates each week; hour for returning from the date; steady dating; selection of friends; crushes and puppy love; personal traits; the furnishings and arrangement of the home and religion are other sources of conflict between parents and their adolescents sons and/or daughters.

Davis (1940) asks the pertinent question, "Why does contemporary western civilization manifest an extraordinary amount of parent-youth conflict?" He points out that in other cultures the outstanding fact is generally not the rebelliousness of youth, but its docility. What then are the peculiar features of our society which gives us one of the extremist examples of endemic filial friction in human history. Davis answers his question by calling attention to the fact that the extremely rapid change in modern civilization, in contrast

to most societies, tends to increase parent-youth conflict. He points out that within a fast changing social order the time interval between generations, ordinarily but a mere moment in the life of a social system, becomes historically significant, thereby creating a hiatus between one generation and another. Inevitably youth is reared in a milieu different from his parents; hence parents become old fashioned and youth rebellious. Clashes occur which in the closely confined circle of the immediate family generate sharp emotion.

Davis further points out that in a stable rural society, which is mainly familistic, the emancipation from parental authority is gradual. Such a society is marked by definite institutionalized steps in which there is no great postponement of marriage, few sex taboos and little open competition for status between parent and child. Davis draws the encouraging conclusion that if ours were this type of society, parents and youth would not be in conflict.

Davis' writings were of interest to the investigator since Kansas is essentially a rural society. The writer was interested in studying the responses of a group of Kansas parents to selected concepts of parent-adolescent relationships. It was the purpose of this thesis to study the attitudes and opinions of parents and to compare them with current concepts of family life. Since the interest was in families the investigator wanted the responses of both fathers and mothers so that a comparison of their attitudes could be made.

PROCEDURE

The subjects used in this investigation were twenty-five sets of rural parents with adolescent sons and/or daughters. Most of the families live on farms and all except two of those which live in towns derive all or the major portion of their income from their farms. Of the two not deriving their income from farming, one father is a city mail carrier and the other father works in a paper mill. The ages of the parents ranged from forty to fifty-five. There is a wide range in the socio-economic level of the families participating in the study.

The subjects were selected by committees of three in each of five counties in the Cooperative Extension districts in Kansas. The committees were composed of the Extension Agricultural Agent, the Home Demonstration Agent and the 4-H Club Agent in each of the five counties. Each committee selected five families which have adolescent sons and/or daughters and whose family life, in the opinion of each of the three committee members, is outstanding in the characteristics named in the criteria established for this study by the writer.

The criteria were:

The family talks things over and works out problems together.

Each family member carries his share of responsibility.

The family members have mutual trust, understanding and affection.

The family works and plays together.

The family is happy and enjoys each other.

The composition of the twenty-five families is shown in Table 1. The composition of the families varied from one family with one child to two

families with five children. There were ten families with two children, six families with three children and four families with four children. With the exception of the two families with five children, the families could be classified as small families. Although there was this variance in family size, each family met the criteria of relationships established for this study. The age range of the children was from five to twenty-seven years. There were seven girls and one boy under twelve years of age and two girls and three boys over nineteen and with these exceptions all children were in the range between twelve and nineteen.

A letter (Appendix Form 1) was written to each set of parents informing them of the study. The purpose of the survey was explained and their co-operation in the survey was requested. Since the investigator made a personal visit to each set of parents, a tentative date for the visit was suggested and an answer card was enclosed.

The investigator constructed a check list to obtain the attitudes toward and opinions about parent-adolescent relationships of the twenty-five sets of parents. The check list of one hundred statements was a modification of the one used by McCord in her study of the responses of college freshmen to concepts of family living. Twenty-one of the statements were used verbatim from the McCord study and twenty-nine were rephrased. Twenty-five of the statements were rephrased from ideas presented by specialists writing currently in the area of the family. For example, Statement 44 - "Dating steady insures a girl against missing parties and social events" was rephrased from Duvall's, Family Living, in which she stated "When a girl has a steady friend she is sure of having a date when she wants one and need not fear missing parties and social affairs". Twenty-five statements were

based on ideas brought out in discussion groups which the writer held for groups of parents and for groups of parents and adolescents.

The check list of attitudes and opinions of parents was first constructed to include one hundred twenty statements. The areas which seemed important to the writer and which she was interested in studying were authority and discipline, family relationships, adolescent independence, allowances and family money, problems of behavior and moral belief, and personal development. The original check list of one hundred twenty statements was divided as follows: fourteen statements on authority and discipline; thirty-six on allowances and family money; twenty-one on problems of behavior and moral belief; and, twelve on personal development. The check list was constructed so that it could be answered "agree", "disagree" or "uncertain". The choice "uncertain" was provided for statements on which the respondent was unwilling to take the exact position stated or felt the need to qualify the statement or did not understand the statement. Concerning the use of the term "uncertain" in responding to statements Cronbach (1950) states:

Some subjects define "uncertain" very narrowly, using it only when they have absolutely no opinion regarding the item. Others consistently use "uncertain" for any statement about which they are not absolutely positive.

The original list of one hundred twenty statements was checked by four faculty members and was pre-tested by twelve members of an adult education class in family relationships. These persons were asked to mark each statement "agree", "disagree", "uncertain", "reword" or "omit". The latter two categories were the basis for the investigator's revision of the check list.

The original list of statements was revised and reduced to a final check list of one hundred statements (Appendix Form 2). The final check

list consisted of seven statements on authority and discipline; thirty-one on family relationships; twenty on adolescent independence; thirteen on allowances and family money; twenty on problems of behavior and moral belief; and, nine on personal development.

The check list was used as the basis for personal visits made to each of the twenty-five homes. Both parents checked the list at the time of this visit. Since the writer was present at the time, it was assured that each parent worked independently. This was important since the investigator was interested in comparing the responses of the fathers and the mothers.

A key which represented the concepts of the recognized authorities was constructed by the investigator. The key was used in analyzing the responses to the statements. Each answer in the key was rated "agree" or "disagree".

In constructing the key the investigator selected, through their writings, four people in the field of child development and family relations. On the basis of their publications and research these people were considered the recognized authorities and are referred to as such in this study. These recognized authorities are Evelyn Millis Duvall, Joseph Kirk Folsom, Robert J. Havighurst, and Percival Mallon Symonds.

Evelyn Millis Duvall, formerly Executive Secretary of the National Council on Family Relations, is nationally recognized in the field. She has lectured widely and her writings on parent-adolescent relationships are used as texts and supplementary references in high schools, colleges and adult education classes. Among these are Family Living and When You Marry.

Joseph Kirk Folsom is professor of Education at Columbia University. He has lectured widely. His many writings in the field are frequently referred to and are used as texts and supplementary references in colleges. His writings include: The Family and Democratic Society; The Family: It's Sociology and Social Psychiatry; and Youth, Family and Education.

Robert J. Havighurst is chairman of the Committee on Human Development at the University of Chicago. He has collaborated with Allison Davis in the study of families to determine the effect of family and community environment on the development of the child. This study was published under the title "Father of the Man". Havighurst collaborated with Hilda Taba on a study of youth over sixteen in an average town between five and ten thousand population. The purpose was to study the various aspects of development in relation to one another. This study was published under the title, "Adolescent Character and Personality".

Percival Mallon Symonds, a professor of Education at Columbia University is the author of many writings in the fields of Education and Psychology. Among his writings are The Dynamics of Parent-Child Relationships, The Psychology of Parent-Child Relationships, Psychological Diagnosis in Social Adjustment and Adolescent Fantasy.

DATA AND DISCUSSION

The responses of the parents indicate both accord and disagreement with one another and with the key (Appendix Table 1). On one statement twenty sets of parents were in accord with one another though not in agreement with the key. On two other statements eighteen sets of parents were

in accord with one another but in disagreement with the key and the responses to two further statements show sixteen sets of parents in disagreement with the key though in accord with one another.

On three statements all parents were in accord with the key whereas on another, twenty-four mothers agreed with the key. On the same statement all of the fathers were in agreement with the key.

In checking the responses indicating uncertainty it was found that more than six mothers were uncertain on five statements. The highest number of mothers checking uncertain on any one statement was eleven. More than six fathers indicated uncertain on two statements, whereas eight was the highest number checking uncertain on a single statement.

Authority and Discipline

The seven statements in the area of authority and discipline had to do with forms of family organization and parental roles. Some of the statements were concerned with the adolescent's discipline and responsibility for his own acts. Parental attitudes toward their own patterns of authority were explored in two statements while the teen agers need for parental guidance was the concern of another statement.

Figure 1 shows the comparison of the responses of both parents in terms of percentage of the group which agreed, disagreed or were uncertain about each statement.

In considering the responses checked by mothers and fathers it was found that there were only three statements in which a higher percentage of fathers than mothers checked agreement with the accepted concepts. In

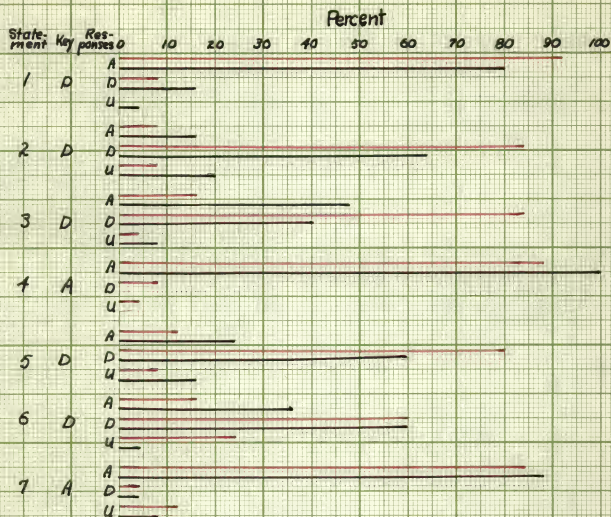


Fig. 1 Authority and discipline.

Respondents checking according to authoritative key. Comparison of fathers and mothers.

Legend
 A = agree
 D = disagree
 U = uncertain
 — = mothers
 — = fathers

four statements more fathers than mothers disagreed with the accepted concepts. There was one statement in this area on which all of the fathers checked agreement with the accepted concepts and another statement on which twenty-three of the mothers or ninety-two per cent and twenty of the fathers or eighty per cent checked disagreement with the concepts of the authorities. There were six statements in which fifteen or sixty per cent of the mothers checked agreement with the accepted concepts and five statements on which fifteen or sixty per cent of the fathers checked agreement.

The percentage of the group expressing uncertainty, as shown in Figure 1, is below twenty per cent except for one statement. On this statement there were six or twenty-four per cent of the mothers who checked that they were uncertain while only one father indicated uncertainty about the same statement. On another statement five of the fathers indicated uncertainty while only two of the mothers checked that they were uncertain.

Table 2 shows the responses of mothers and fathers as they agreed with the key and as they agreed with one another. These identical parental responses are significant in regard to the criteria for selection of the families for this study and provides interesting comparisons with the McCord findings.

More than half of the group agreed with the key except on statement number one. This statement on which there was the greatest disagreement with the concepts of the authorities by both fathers and mothers was "The father should be the head of the family". Twenty-three of the mothers and twenty of the fathers indicated disagreement with the accepted answer. Two mothers and four fathers answered that they agreed with the authorities whereas only two fathers were uncertain. Even though the parents disagreed

Table 2. Summary of identical parental responses: Authority and Discipline

State- ment	:	Key	: Mothers			: Fathers			: Identical responses		
			: A	: D	: U	: A	: D	: U	: A	: D	: U
1		D	23	2	-	20	4	1	20	2	-
2		D	2	21	2	4	16	5	2	16	2
3		D	4	21	1	12	11	2	4	11	1
4		A	22	2	1	25	-	-	22	-	-
5		D	3	20	2	6	15	4	3	15	2
6		D	4	15	6	9	15	1	4	15	1
7		A	21	1	3	22	1	2	21	1	2

with the concepts of the authorities, the degree in which they were in accord is significant. This finding is consistent with the writings of Davis (p 4) relative to the pattern of rural families.

McCord's findings on this statement showed a higher percentage of boys than of girls disagreeing with the accepted answer. Only twenty-eight per cent of the girls and nineteen per cent of the boys were in agreement that the father should not be the head of the family.

This statement, as were the other six in the area of authority and discipline, was used as a means of exploring the parents' attitudes toward autocratic and authoritarian family relationships as contrasted to the democratic family relationships. In the autocratic or patriarchal family the father was the head of the family. He made all rules and regulations and no one questioned them. He was the disciplinarian and made all important decisions for the family. His authority was absolute and not to be questioned.

Elder concluded from her study of thirty-two Iowa fathers that:

The traditional conception of the family holds that the father is the head of the house, that the mother is entrusted with the care of the house and the children and that in return for the unselfish devotion of the parents to their duties, the children owe their parents honor and obedience. Today these values are being discarded by those who are creating developmental families, based on inter-personal relations of mutual affection, companionship and understanding, with a recognition of individual capabilities, desires and needs for the development of each member of the family, be he father, mother or child.

The developmental concepts indicate democratic relationships within the family. Each member is an individual and has privileges and responsibilities. Each member has a voice in making important decisions which affect the family.

The difference of opinion between fathers and mothers regarding the statement "Children should be taught to obey without question" was inter-

esting. Twenty-one of the mothers or eighty-four per cent agreed with the accepted concepts while two disagreed and two were uncertain. Eleven or forty-four per cent of the fathers were in agreement with the accepted answer, twelve or forty-eight per cent disagreed and two were uncertain of their position.

McCord's findings were that fifty per cent of the boys and fifty-seven per cent of the girls disagreed with this authoritarian concept. Authorities are in agreement that obedience is not the goal of democratic families but rather there should be guidance toward self discipline.

In the democratic family the work and the play are shared. There is cooperation in responsibility and in work. Neither belongs exclusively to the father or the mother and the children accept and assume both according to their capabilities.

Folsom (1943) states that democracy does not mean 'laissez-faire'. It does not mean the absence of all discipline and punishment. It means that obedience is valued only when a necessary means, and not as an end. It means that the parents, adults, or any other class of persons who hold power are not to impose ends or values by authority, except the value of freedom itself.

Family Relationships

There were thirty-one statements in the area of family relationships. Figure 2 shows the comparison of parental responses in terms of per cent of the group. On only two of the statements did all of the mothers and fathers agree with the accepted concepts. On many of the statements, however,

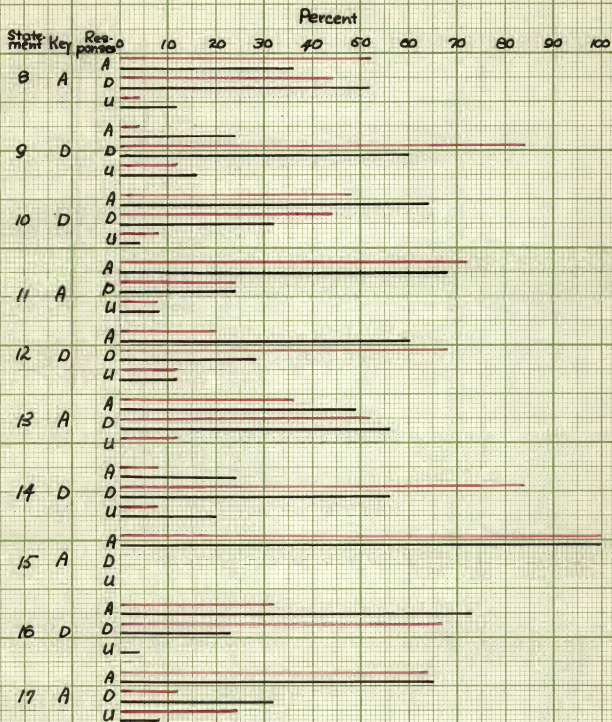
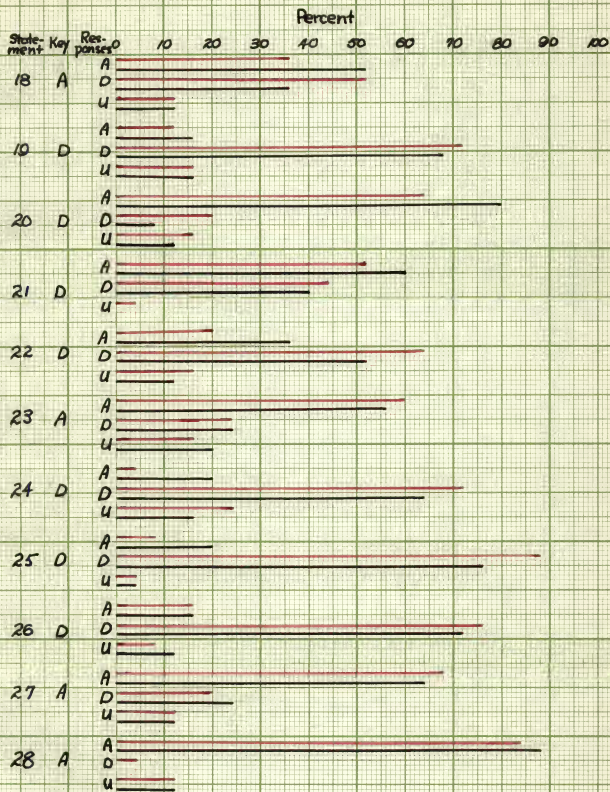


Fig.2 Family relationships.

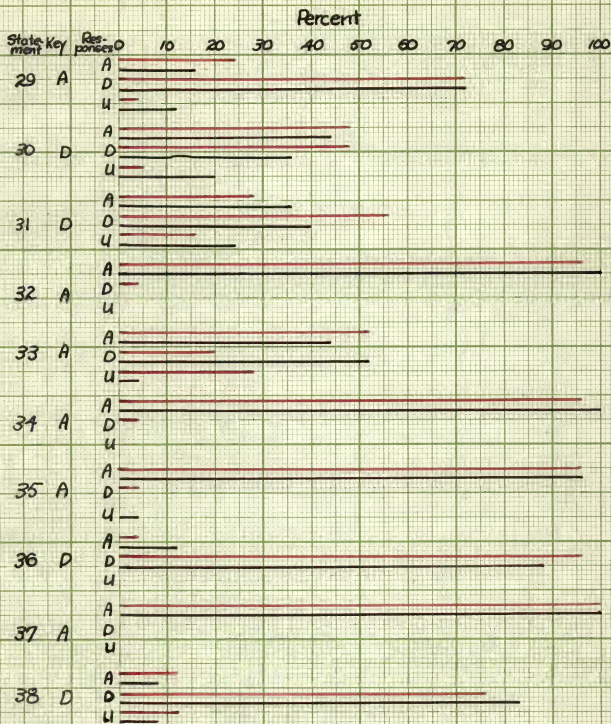
Respondents checking according
to authoritative key.

Comparison of fathers and
mothers.

Legend
A = agree
D = disagree
U = uncertain
— = mothers
— = fathers



Cont. Fig. 2.



Concl. Fig. 2.

there appears a high percentage of acceptance of present day concepts of family living. On thirteen statements seventy-five per cent of one or both parents hold accepted attitudes or opinions whereas on twenty-six statements more than half of the group conform to relationships consistent with democratic family life. There were two statements on which twenty-four of the mothers agreed and one disagreed with the accepted response. On the same statement, however, all of the fathers agreed with the authorities. On another statement twenty-four mothers and twenty-four fathers agreed with the accepted concepts with one of the mothers disagreeing and one of the fathers indicating uncertainty as to his position.

There were six statements on which more fathers agreed with the accepted response than did mothers. There were twenty statements on which more than half of the fathers were in agreement with the authorities and eight statements on which more than half of the fathers were in disagreement with the accepted answers. There were only three statements on which less than one fourth of the fathers were in agreement with the accepted concepts.

The answers showed that more than half of the mothers were in agreement with the authorities on twenty-four statements and that more than half of the mothers were in disagreement with the authorities on five statements. Less than one fourth of the mothers were in agreement with the accepted concepts on two statements and seven were uncertain as to their position on one statement.

Table 3 shows the number of responses in relation to the key and also the number of responses on which parents were in accord. In this category of family relationships there were two statements on which there was complete agreement. There were six statements on which more than twenty parents were

Table 3. Summary of identical parental responses: Family relationships.

State- ment	:	Key	Mothers			Fathers			Identical responses		
			A	D	U	A	D	U	A	D	U
8		A	13	11	1	9	13	3	9	11	1
9		D	1	21	3	6	15	4	1	15	3
10		D	12	11	2	16	8	1	12	8	1
11		A	18	6	2	17	6	2	17	6	2
12		D	5	17	3	15	7	3	5	7	3
13		A	9	13	3	11	14	-	9	13	-
14		D	2	21	2	6	14	5	2	14	2
15		A	25	-	-	25	-	-	25	-	-
16		D	8	17	-	18	6	1	8	6	-
17		A	16	3	6	15	8	2	15	3	2
18		A	9	13	3	13	9	3	9	9	3
19		D	3	18	4	4	17	4	3	17	4
20		D	16	5	4	20	2	3	16	2	3
21		D	13	11	1	15	10	-	13	10	-
22		D	5	16	4	9	13	3	5	13	3
23		A	15	6	4	14	6	5	14	6	4
24		D	1	18	6	5	16	4	1	16	4
25		D	2	22	1	5	19	1	2	19	1
26		D	4	19	2	4	18	3	4	18	2
27		A	17	5	3	16	6	3	16	5	3
28		A	21	1	3	22	-	3	21	-	3
29		A	6	18	1	4	18	3	4	18	1
30		D	12	12	1	11	9	5	11	9	5
31		D	7	14	4	4	9	10	4	9	4
32		A	24	1	-	25	-	-	24	-	-
33		A	13	5	7	11	13	1	11	5	1
34		A	24	1	-	25	-	-	24	-	-
35		A	24	-	1	24	-	1	24	-	1
36		D	1	24	-	3	22	-	1	22	-
37		A	25	-	-	25	-	-	25	-	-
38		D	3	19	3	2	21	2	2	19	2

in accord and also were in agreement with the keyed response.

On the statement No. 8 "Parents are more strict with their older children than with the younger ones," thirteen of the mothers were in agreement with the accepted answer and nine of the fathers were in agreement. Thirteen of the fathers and eleven of the mothers were in disagreement with the authorities while one father and one mother were uncertain as to their position.

In discussing this aspect of family relationships and the difference in privileges of older and younger children, Dennis (1934) makes the statement that:

There is usually no unfairness in the assumption that older children are to be allowed more privileges than younger children. In the first place, the older ones should be better prepared to look after themselves. If they have been given more and more responsibilities as they have grown older, they are more capable of making their own decisions than are younger children and of course they have had more opportunity to learn by experience and observation.

Rioch (1951) gives this view of the question:

Many of today's adolescents were brought up in the framework of a more rigid schedule, and have younger brother or sisters who were trained more leniently. Not only did the parents feel easier about raising the second or third child but the pattern of child care had been altered. This again confuses the adolescent, as it has his parents. It also adds weight to the adolescent's perennial complaint that the younger ones in the family get away with far more than he himself ever could.

In regard to the statement No. 18 "Jealousy between children in the same family is to be expected" more of the fathers were in agreement with the accepted response than the mothers. Thirteen of the fathers expressed agreement with the authorities whereas thirteen of the mothers expressed disagreement. It would appear that fathers consider their children somewhat more objectively than do mothers. Authorities are in agreement that a certain amount of jealousy between children of the same family is to be

expected. Bacmeister (1951) acknowledges the fact that there is jealousy between children of the same family and at the same-time expresses regret of the fact because of its implications. Bacmeister states:

Sibling jealousy and rivalry are real enough. Few siblings grow up without feeling them more or less. For some, it is a deep and bitter experience. It is probable that at best any child is bound to feel some jealousy of another who shares his home, his toys, and his parents' love. Each is humanly - and childishly - selfish.

Symonds (1949) is of the opinion that sibling rivalry is to be expected in every family but that it will be acute in proportion to the extent of parental rejection. Davis and Havighurst (1947) state:

Mothers do not like to admit that there is jealousy between their children. Indeed, the most powerful ideal which our society sets up for the parents is that of 'equal love and equal care' for each child. The average mother is afraid, therefore, to admit that her children are jealous, because she senses that their jealousy implies some unequal treatment on her part. In addition there is a powerful code in our society that there should be peace and mutual acceptance between children in the same family. Therefore, a mother fears that, if she admits that her children are jealous, the outsider will conclude that she is a poor mother, with a disorganized family. In spite of these deep-laid taboos, we found that it is normal for rivalry to occur in both middle class and lowerclass families.

Several other statements explored the opinions of parents on the matter of sibling rivalry; competition as preparation for life and teasing as an aid to cope with such experiences away from home. In checking the statement, No. 20 "Competition between children in the family prepares them to meet competition in the world" five of the mothers and two of the fathers were in agreement; sixteen of the mothers and twenty of the fathers were in disagreement; four mothers and three fathers were uncertain. It would appear that the majority of the parents interviewed accepted competition as a natural and important experience of the growing child. Authorities hold the opinion that competition is a normal part of life and is the social

pattern of the world. At the same time, parents should not compare one child against another to the discredit of either. Each child should be encouraged to improve his own achievement and receive recognition for his accomplishments.

Neisser and Piers (1951) wrote that:

Competing is not bad in itself. In fact, it takes a certain amount of healthy aggression to have the courage to match yourself against your fellows. Some people are afraid of rivalry and solve their problem by running away from competition figuratively and literally. ... It is not competition in itself that is good or bad. It is the attitude toward competition, toward winning out or losing, toward possessing completely or sharing, which he or she "absorbed" in early childhood from the atmosphere of the home, that largely determines whether rivalry is a destructive force or whether it can be turned to good account. Whether rivalry is good or bad for children depends, too, on how parents have solved the problem for themselves.

Several statements were included to explore the parents' understanding of the usual aspects of adolescent-parent and adolescent-friend relationships. On the statements, No. 33 "Teen agers find it easier to confide in a friend than in their parents" and No. 10 "In matters of socially acceptable behavior adolescents regard the opinions of their parents more highly than those of their friends", more mothers than fathers were in agreement with the accepted responses. However, in neither statement was the number of those in agreement with the concepts as stated greater than thirteen. Sixteen of the fathers and twelve of the mothers were in disagreement with the accepted response on the second statement.

It would appear that the transition from childhood, in which the parent was the principal confidant and counselor, to adolescence, when the parent may not be the principal confidant and counselor, is so gradual that parents often are unaware that it has occurred. On the other hand, parents may be unwilling to concede that their children are growing up and having opinions which differ from those of the parents.

Eckert (1950) in discussing with adolescents the need to conform to opinions of the group states:

Many of you young people are upset as you move into this dating period by the growing problem of getting along with parents. Up to now you have been controlled largely by what adults have wanted you to do - your parents, your teachers, your club leader, and so on. Now you are beginning to want to please them. But often what parents consider important seems unimportant to your friends, and what they consider important seems silly to your parents.

Duvall (1947) offers this opinion:

Young people naturally try to be like other young people. Youth is constantly trying to be like, look like, sound like, and act like each other. Parents often find this hard to accept. Yet it represents an identification with one's own generation that is part of growing up.

That it often is difficult for parents to accept the fact that the opinions of contemporaries will be valued above those of the parents was evidenced in the interviews with the respondents. In discussing the difference in the standards of parents and adolescents, Dennis (1934) points out that there are questions concerning right and wrong behavior in social situations and this leads to serious friction. Parents and adolescents may be equally sincere in their convictions yet each may feel that the other is unjust or unreasonable.

In writing of the normal course of development in the social growth of the adolescent, Cole (1948) emphasizes that with the on coming of adolescence, the boy or girl becomes acutely aware of social pressures and relationships. It is this sensitivity that leads the adolescent into the conformity characteristic of the period. Cole states:

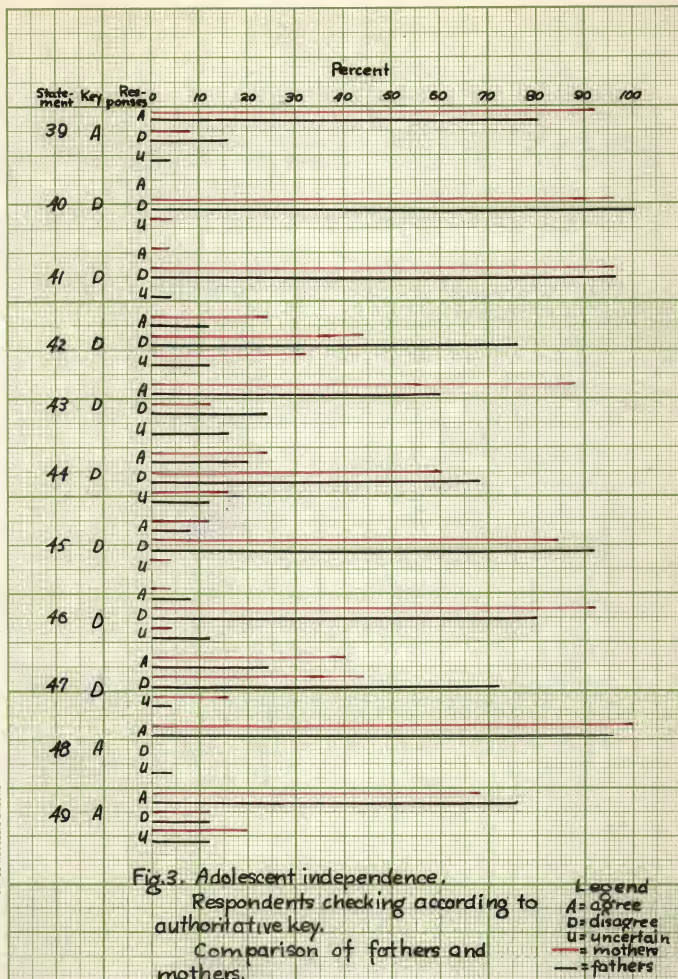
It is clear that the problem of establishing desirable and happy personal relations is one of the paramount concerns of youth. They long for understanding friendships. They want to know how to attract friends of their own age, of their own sex and of the opposite

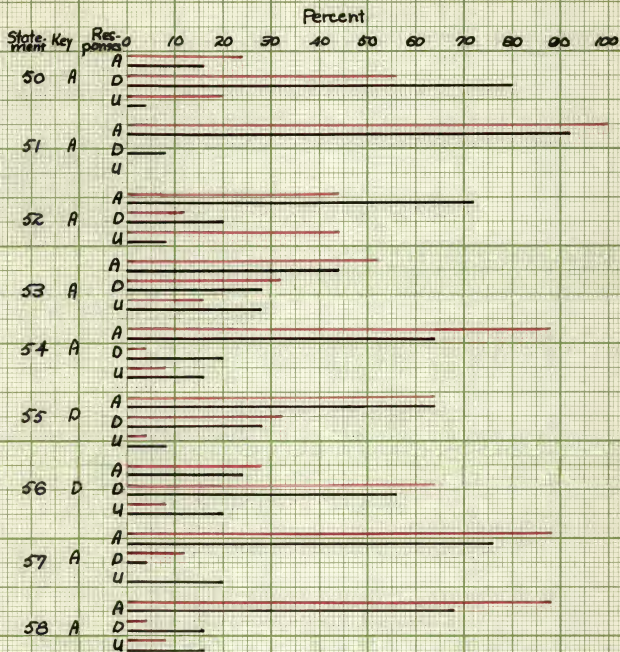
sex. They are tremendously concerned about the application of standards of behavior to their social lives. They want help in clarifying confusions which come about inevitably because their parents live with a set of ideals and ideas different from those of their own age groups.

Adolescent Independence

Figure 3 shows the percentages of the group of mothers and of the group of fathers for each response to the statements concerned with adolescent independence. There were twenty statements in this area. From the high percentage of responses in agreement with the concepts as expressed by the authorities, it may be concluded that the parents cooperating in this study seem to recognize that the adolescent desires to be independent of parental control. Twenty-three or ninety-two per cent of the mothers and twenty or eighty per cent of the fathers answered in agreement with the accepted concept on the statement, No. 39 "It is normal for adolescent boys and girls to want to be independent of parental control". On two other statements in this area all of the mothers answered in agreement with the authorities. Twenty-four or ninety-six per cent of the fathers answered in agreement with the accepted concepts on one of those two statements whereas twenty-three or ninety-two per cent answered in agreement on the other statement.

In this area more than half of the mothers answered in agreement with the authorities on fourteen statements and more than half of the fathers answered in agreement on sixteen statements. More than half of the fathers and mothers answered in disagreement with the accepted answers on only three statements. On nine statements more mothers than fathers answered in agreement with the accepted concepts while on eight statements more of





Concl. Fig. 3.

the fathers than the mothers answered in agreement. On two statements more than one fourth of the mothers indicated that they were uncertain of their position whereas more than one fourth of the fathers indicated uncertain on only one statement.

On thirteen statements more than half of both fathers and mothers indicated agreement with the accepted concepts whereas on three statements more than half of both fathers and mothers indicated disagreement with the accepted answers.

Mothers were in greater agreement with the key than were fathers on eleven statements whereas fathers were in greater agreement on seven statements. On three statements the parents were near in accord but were in disagreement with the key.

Table 4 gives the summary of identical parental responses. It is to be noted that there are no statements in this category on which there was one hundred per cent parental accord. There were, however, more than twenty parents in agreement with the key and with one another for six of the twenty statements.

On the statement, No. 42 "High school girls should not date boys who are two or three years older than they", fourteen of the fathers answered in agreement with the authorities; eleven of the mothers answered in agreement, six answered in disagreement and eight indicated uncertainty. The statement, No. 43 "When high school students are out for an evening parents should know just where they are" brought disagreement with the accepted answer from both fathers and mothers. The writer is of the opinion that the parents overlooked the word 'just' in the statement, or that it was ambiguous since the meaning of 'exactly' was intended. In listening to the discussion

Table 4. Summary of identical parental responses: Adolescent independence.

State- ment	:	Key	Mothers			:	Fathers			:	Identical responses		
			A	D	U		A	D	U		A	D	U
39		A	23	2	-		20	4	1		20	2	-
40		D	-	24	1		-	25	-		-	24	-
41		D	1	24	-		-	24	1		-	24	-
42		D	6	11	8		3	19	3		3	11	3
43		D	22	3	-		15	6	4		15	3	-
44		D	6	15	4		5	17	3		5	15	3
45		D	2	23	-		2	23	-		2	21	-
46		D	1	23	1		2	20	3		1	20	1
47		D	10	11	4		6	18	1		6	11	1
48		A	25	-	-		24	-	1		24	-	-
49		A	17	3	5		19	3	3		17	3	3
50		A	6	14	5		4	20	1		4	14	1
51		A	25	-	-		23	2	-		23	-	-
52		A	11	3	11		18	5	2		11	3	2
53		A	13	8	4		11	7	7		11	7	4
54		A	22	1	2		16	5	4		16	1	2
55		D	16	9	1		16	7	2		16	7	1
56		D	7	16	2		6	14	5		6	14	2
57		A	22	3	-		19	1	5		19	1	-
58		A	22	1	2		17	4	4		17	1	2

of the respondents after they had marked the check list, the investigator found evidence of good relationships in this situation. It appeared that most of the families had a mutual understanding as to the hour at which the teen agers would return home from the date, of the place of the evenings' entertainment and an understanding that the teen ager would communicate with his parents if the plans were changed.

The responses to the statement, No. 47 "The standards of the dating couple should be largely the responsibility of the girl", indicated a variance of opinion. Eighteen of the fathers were in agreement with the authorities, six were in disagreement and one was uncertain. Eleven of the mothers were in agreement with the accepted concepts. Ten were in disagreement and four were uncertain of their position.

In McCord's study the findings showed quite different opinions. Fifty-nine per cent of the girls and fifty-eight per cent of the boys were in agreement with the accepted response. Thirty-two per cent of the girls but only seventeen per cent of the boys agreed with the statement. Nine per cent of the girls and twenty-five per cent of the boys indicated uncertainty of their position on this statement.

Duvall (1950) says of the responsibility for the standards of the dating couple that there used to be a time when responsibility for the conduct of a couple rested almost entirely with the girl. She was supposed to see to it that the boy met her standards of conduct. The boy, on the other hand, felt justified in going as far as the girl permitted. If anything happened she was to blame. Intelligent people today realize that the boy has some responsibility for his conduct too. Girls are no longer looked upon as mere playthings, but are increasingly regarded as companions who are appreciated, respected and enjoyed as persons.

Mellon (1946) sums up adolescent independence when she says:

Adolescence is the bridge-time between childhood and maturity. The adolescent at one moment wants to remain a dependent infant. At the next moment he entertains rosy dreams about an independence he believes he has already attained. He is possessed by the urgency of his need to free himself from the domination of his parents. Once the adolescent boy and girl have attained a sense of security in their own identity, they no longer need be so defensive in their attitude toward their parents.

Allowances and Family Money

There were thirteen statements included in the area on allowances and family money. The scope of statements explored the parents' attitudes toward the teen ager considering his relation to the family income as well as his guidance in money management and his need for a feeling of independence as regards money. Figure 4 shows the comparison in percentage groups of mothers' and of fathers' responses to the thirteen statements in this category. There was one statement on which all of the fathers and mothers were in agreement with the accepted concepts. That statement was, No. 71 "When teen agers live at home they should give any money they earn to their parents". It would appear that these respondents have a democratic attitude in that phase of family relationships.

On the statement, No. 69 "The most important reason for having an allowance is to teach children to manage money" twenty-four fathers and mothers disagreed with the accepted response. One father and one mother or only one set of parents agreed with the authorities. The allowance is valuable in that it gives children experience in handling money but in adolescence it is more valuable in the feeling of independence and self confidence which it engenders. In discussing the importance of the allowance, Duvall referred

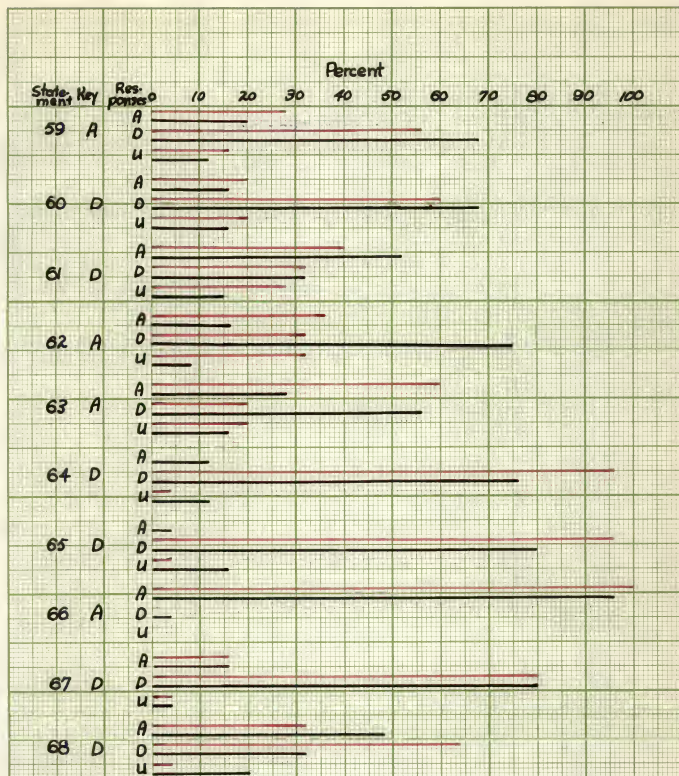
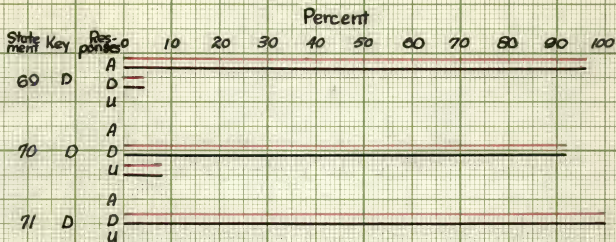


Fig. 4. Allowances and family money.

Respondents checking according
to authoritative key.

Comparison of fathers and
mothers.

Legend
A = agree
D = disagree
U = uncertain
— = mothers
— = fathers



Concl. Fig. 4.

to the Code of Parent and Youth which evolved from meetings of parents and youth in the Ferndale-Pleasant Ridge Community in Michigan. Desirable standards of conduct for parents and youth were discussed in these meetings. One point in the code concerned allowances. It stated that "an allowance is an essential aspect in the development of confidence and responsibility".

In connection with this statement another statement which read, No. 68 "The teen ager should report to his parents how he spends his allowance" received agreement with the accepted answers from sixteen of the mothers with eight of the mothers disagreeing. Twelve of the fathers disagreed with the authorities while five indicated uncertainty. The writer recognizes that the trend has been toward emphasis of money management rather than emphasis of development of self confidence and independence. It is the concept of the authorities and has been the observation of the investigator that teen agers need the feeling of independence which comes from having money of their own to be used in their own way without dictation from their parents.

A summary of identical parental response to the thirteen statements in this area is given in Table 5. The responses to statement, No. 59 "The teen ager's allowance should be large enough to cover his clothing costs", tended toward an autocratic attitude on the part of the parents. Fourteen of the mothers and seventeen of the fathers were in disagreement with the accepted concepts. Seven of the mothers and four of the fathers agreed with the authorities while four of the mothers and three of the fathers indicated uncertainty. These respondents showed inconsistency in checking the statement, No. 87 "Teen agers cannot be trusted to make good selections in buying their clothes". Twenty-four mothers agreed with the authorities

Table 5. Summary of identical parental responses: Allowances and family money.

State- ment	:	Key	: Mothers			: Fathers			: Identical responses		
			: A	: D	: U	: A	: D	: U	: A	: D	: U
59		A	7	14	4	5	17	3	5	14	3
60		D	5	15	5	4	17	4	4	15	4
61		D	10	8	7	13	8	4	10	8	4
62		A	9	8	8	4	19	2	4	8	2
63		A	15	5	5	7	14	4	7	5	4
64		D	-	24	1	3	19	3	-	19	1
65		D	-	24	1	1	20	4	-	20	1
66		A	25	-	-	24	1	-	24	-	-
67		D	4	20	1	4	20	1	4	20	1
68		D	8	16	1	12	8	5	8	8	1
69		D	24	1	-	24	1	-	24	1	-
70		D	-	23	2	-	23	2	-	23	2
71		D	-	25	-	-	25	-	-	25	-

and nineteen of the fathers checked agreement. One of the mothers disagreed with the accepted response and two of the fathers showed disagreement while four of the fathers were uncertain of their position.

The father and mother of one family observed that immediately after the allowance was increased to cover clothing costs, the teen agers went on a spending spree and found themselves without funds for necessary items until the next allowance was due. It was the opinion of these parents that not only did these teen agers learn to plan and to budget but they adopted a new attitude toward the care of their clothes and an acceptance of the need to live within their income.

The statement, No. 62 "A teen ager has a right to his share of the family income" brought some surprising answers from this group of respondents who had indicated democratic attitudes in other phases of family relationships. Nineteen of the fathers indicated disagreement with the concepts of authorities while only four answered in agreement and two were uncertain of their position. Nine of the mothers were in agreement with the accepted answer, eight in disagreement and eight indicated uncertainty.

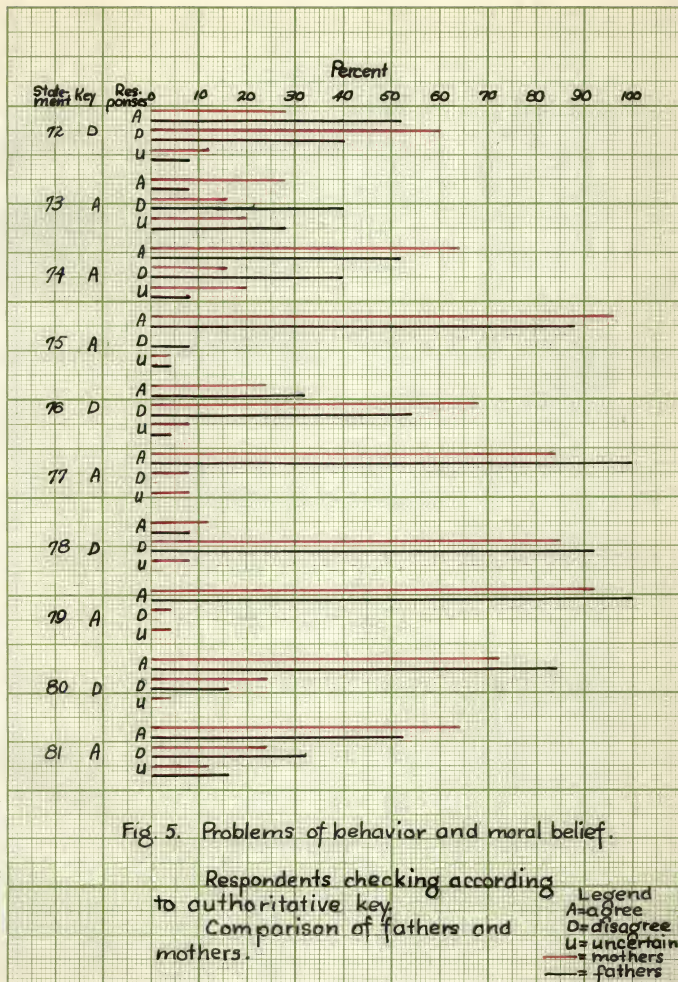
It appears that these parents have not considered the fact that as members of the family the adolescent sons and/or daughters have a right to learn to carry their share of responsibility. They appear not to have considered that each member of the family has a share of the family work which he must accept and assume. In relation to this responsibility as a family member is the fact that the adolescent, also as a family member, is entitled to his share of the family income.

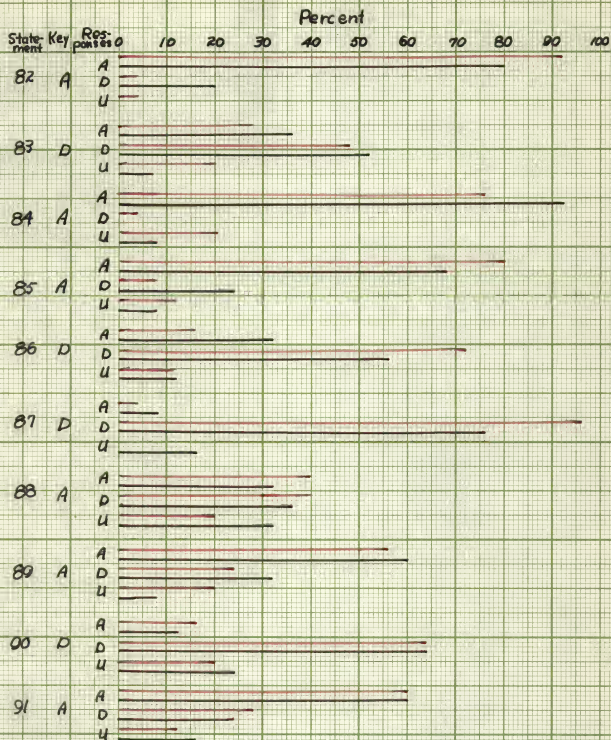
Problems of Behavior and Moral Belief

Twenty statements were in the area exploring parental responses to the problems of behavior and moral belief. Figure 5 gives the graphical presentation of the percentage of mother and father responses to the statements in this category. More than fifty per cent of the mothers were in agreement with the accepted answers on sixteen statements and more than fifty per cent of the fathers were in agreement with the accepted answers on eighteen statements. A higher percentage of mothers than fathers were in agreement with the accepted concepts on eleven statements and more of the fathers were in agreement with the accepted concepts on six statements. There was no statement on which all mothers agreed but there were two statements on which one hundred per cent of the fathers agreed.

The two statements on which the fathers were in one hundred per cent agreement with the accepted concepts were, statement No. 77 "Teen aged girls should not smoke" and statement No. 79 "Parents should see that their teen agers do not attend drinking parties". Twenty-one or eighty-four per cent of the mothers were in agreement with the authorities that teen aged girls should not smoke, while two or eight per cent were in disagreement and two or eight per cent were uncertain. On the statement, "Parents should see that their teen agers do not attend drinking parties" twenty-three of the mothers were in agreement with the accepted response and two were uncertain of their position. This is shown in Table 6 which gives a summary of identical parental responses.

Responses to statement, No. 73 "Parents should put teen agers on their own and then expect the best of them" were in many cases inconsistent with





Concl. Fig. 5.

Table 6. Summary of identical parental responses: Problems of behavior and moral belief.

State- ment	:	Key	: Mothers			: Fathers			: Identical responses		
			: A	: D	: U	: A	: D	: U	: A	: D	: U
72		D	7	15	3	13	10	2	7	10	2
73		A	7	15	3	2	20	3	2	15	3
74		A	16	4	5	13	10	2	13	4	2
75		A	24	-	1	22	2	1	22	-	1
76		D	6	17	2	8	16	1	6	16	1
77		A	21	2	2	25	-	-	21	-	-
78		D	3	20	2	2	23	-	2	20	-
79		A	23	1	1	25	-	-	23	-	-
80		D	18	6	1	21	4	-	18	4	-
81		A	16	6	3	13	8	4	13	6	3
82		A	23	1	1	20	5	-	20	1	-
83		D	7	12	5	9	13	3	7	12	3
84		A	19	1	5	23	-	2	19	-	2
85		A	20	2	3	17	6	2	17	2	2
86		D	4	18	3	8	14	3	4	14	3
87		D	1	24	-	2	19	4	1	19	-
88		A	10	10	5	8	9	8	8	9	5
89		A	14	6	5	15	8	2	14	6	2
90		D	4	16	5	3	16	6	3	16	5
91		A	15	7	3	15	6	4	15	6	3

the opinions and attitudes expressed by the parents during the interviews. For that reason, the writer questions whether the statement was correctly understood by the respondents. It was the investigators intention that the respondents interpret the statement that the teen agers had received from their parents guidance on proper conduct. Fifteen of the mothers and twenty of the fathers indicated disagreement with the accepted answer. Seven of the mothers answered in agreement with the authorities and three were uncertain of their opinion. Two of the fathers indicated agreement and three were uncertain.

The greatest variance of responses occurred on the statement, "The person who feels the need to boss is not mature". Ten of the mothers answered in agreement with the authorities, ten answered in disagreement and five indicated uncertainty. Eight of the fathers answered in agreement with the accepted concepts and nine answered in disagreement with eight indicating uncertainty. Duvall (1950) expresses her opinion, "A person is socially mature to the extent to which he can work with others democratically. If he has to boss all of the time, or even some of the time; he still has some growing up to do".

On the statement, No. 89 "Timid people usually are not popular" fourteen of the mothers and fifteen of the fathers indicated agreement with the concepts of the authorities. Six of the mothers and eight of the fathers answered in disagreement whereas five of the mothers and two of the fathers indicated uncertainty. In discussing this aspect of behavior, Duvall (1950) states that timid people may be thinking more about themselves than others or may not have had experiences in their family which help them become friendly persons. This would appear to indicate that the timid person usually does

not achieve great popularity since it is difficult for him to make friends easily.

Personal Development

There were nine statements on the check list in the area of personal development. Some of these statements were highly controversial as indicated by the responses of the parents.

Figure 6 shows these responses in percentages of the group participating in the study. There was no statement on which all parents agreed with the accepted concepts. The statement, No. 97 "Teen agers should attend the same church which their parents attend" received sixty-four per cent disagreement with the accepted response from the mothers and eighty per cent disagreement with the accepted response from the father, twenty-eight per cent of the mothers and twelve per cent of the fathers indicated agreement, whereas eight per cent of the mothers and eight per cent of the fathers were uncertain of their position. Sixty-four per cent of the mothers and sixty-eight per cent of the fathers agreed with the authorities that, No. 96 "Teen age is a period at which religious doubts occur". On this same point, twenty-four per cent of the mothers and twenty per cent of the fathers disagreed and twelve per cent of the mothers and twelve per cent of the fathers indicated uncertainty.

Stiles (1951) writes:

It is natural and necessary for young people to establish, for themselves, ethical values by which they are guided and to which they accord faith and devotion. Such moral codes determine the individual's relationship to and dependence upon religion. They shape his behavior in dealing with other individuals and they guide his adjustment to group mores. At few other times in

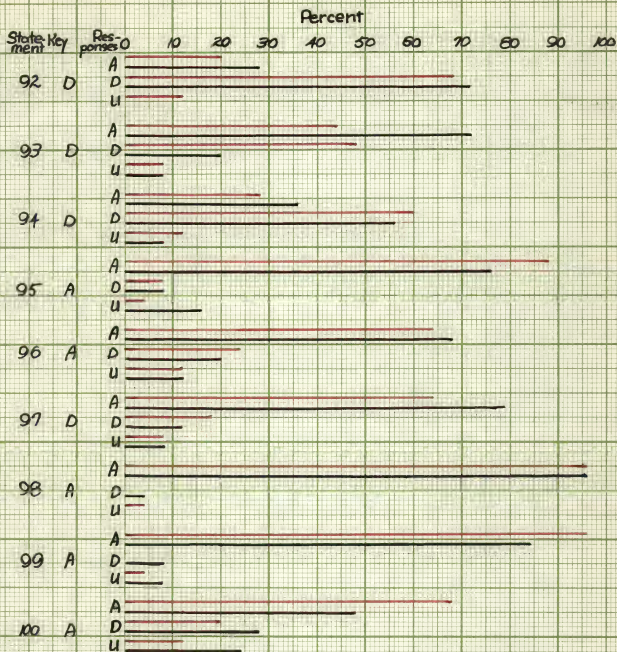


Fig. 6. Personal development.

Respondents checking according
to authoritative key.
Comparison of fathers and
mothers.

Legend
A=agree
D=disagree
U=uncertain
—=mothers
—=fathers

our nation's history have adolescents needed so urgently to maintain faith in and devotion to their religion, to fundamental and lasting human values, our nation, their families and themselves. Perhaps at few other times has this task been made more difficult by the confused and inconsistent example set for them by responsible adults.

Strang (1951) reminds us that adolescents often present their personal difficulties as religious perplexities. Among the discrepancies with which adolescents are faced are the differences in beliefs and standards of conduct that exist between parents and the church school, between parents and one's age mates, between the church school and one's age mates.

Cole (1943) states that as children approach adolescence and begin to question authority of all kinds, they may revolt from church as well as from both home and school domination. A considerable number of adolescents investigate religion anew, as a possible source of both emotional and intellectual stimulation and satisfaction. A few find what they seek, but more do not. Adolescents want to find something in religion, but most of them fail to do so, and their reactions to failure often take the form of intolerance, cynicism and withdrawal from contact with church activities.

Table 7 summarizes identical parental responses to the statements on personal development. In this area the parents were in near accord on the majority of the statements. On six of the nine statements the responses were in agreement with the accepted concepts whereas on two statements the parents were in accord with one another though in disagreement with the concepts.

All except one father and one mother were in agreement that, statement No. 98 "Teen agers feel more secure when their parents have a religion they are sincerely trying to live". Twenty-two of the mothers and nineteen of the fathers were in agreement that, No. 95 "Problems of adolescence have a

lasting effect on personality".

Fathers and mothers were in disagreement with one another on the statement, No. 93 "Success in school work must be stressed at all times".

Eighteen of the fathers and eleven of the mothers were in disagreement with the accepted concept.

SUMMARY

A study was made of parental response to selected concepts of parent-adolescent relationships. The areas explored were: authority and discipline, family relationship, adolescent independence, allowances and family money, problems of behavior and moral belief and personal development. A check list of one hundred statements in the six areas was used as the basis for personal interviews with the subjects participating in the study. The subjects were twenty-five sets of rural parents with adolescent sons and/or daughters. These parents were selected by committees of three, the Extension Agricultural Agent, the Home Demonstration Agent and the 4-H Club Agent in each of five counties in the three Cooperative Extension districts of Kansas. The selections were made on the basis of criteria established by the writer. Four people, selected on the basis of their publications and research, were referred to as authorities. The investigator constructed a key, representing the concepts of the authorities, which was used in analyzing the parental responses to the statements on the check list.

The responses of the fathers and mothers were analyzed in relation to the authoritative key and in relation to one another. Analyses of these data indicated that the percentage of mothers agreeing with the accepted key was higher than that of the fathers on fifty-nine of the one hundred

statements. The percentage of fathers agreeing with the accepted responses was higher on twenty-nine of the one hundred statements and the percentage was the same for both fathers and mothers on twelve of the statements. The percentage of mothers in disagreement with the key was higher than that of the fathers on twenty-eight statements whereas the percentage of fathers in disagreement with the key was higher than that of the mothers on fifty-four of the one hundred statements. The highest percentage of parental accord was found in the area of authority and discipline. In this area more than sixty per cent accord was indicated on six of the seven statements. The least accord was found in the area of problems of behavior and moral belief where sixty per cent or more accord was indicated on only eleven of the twenty statements.

More mothers indicated uncertainty of their opinions in the area of adolescent independence than in any other area. On one statement in this area eleven mothers checked "uncertain" whereas only two fathers indicated uncertainty. On one statement seven fathers and four mothers checked that they were uncertain. There were twenty-one statements about which no fathers indicated uncertainty and eighteen statements about which no mothers were uncertain.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Appreciation is expressed to Dr. Lois R. Schulz, Head of the Department of Child Welfare and Euthenics, and to Dr. Gladys Bellinger, Associate Professor in the Department of Child Welfare and Euthenics, for their interest and guidance in this study. The sincere interest of Miss Georgiana Smurthwaite, State Home Demonstration Leader, and the cooperation of the County Extension Agents and the parents who served as respondents in the study are gratefully acknowledged.

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APPENDIX

Form 1. Letter to respondents.

January 10, 1952

Mr. and Mrs. _____

Dear Mr. and Mrs. _____:

To fill the requirements for an advanced degree I am doing some research in the field of Family Life in the Extension Division of Kansas State College.

In this research it is necessary to make a survey for which I am selecting twenty-five families who are among our good cooperators in the Extension program over the state.

Would you be willing to cooperate with me in this survey? I believe that you would enjoy doing it and would find it very worth while. When it is finished I shall be glad to send you a summary of the results if you care to see them.

If you will help me I should like to call on you in your home some time _____. I shall have some statements which I want you to check. It will take about 30 minutes of your time.

To make it easier for you to answer I am enclosing an addressed card.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Mrs. Vivian Briggs
Extension Specialist
in Family Life

VB:slm

Enc.

Table 1. Number respondents checking statement agree, disagree or uncertain.

Statement	Key	Mothers			Fathers		
		A	D	U	A	D	U
1	D	23	2	-	20	4	1
2	D	2	21	2	4	16	5
3	D	4	21	1	12	11	2
4	A	22	2	1	25	-	-
5	D	3	20	2	6	15	4
6	D	4	15	6	9	15	1
7	A	21	1	3	22	1	2
8	A	13	11	1	9	13	3
9	D	1	21	3	6	15	4
10	D	12	11	2	16	8	1
11	A	18	6	2	17	6	2
12	D	5	17	3	15	7	3
13	A	9	13	3	11	14	-
14	D	2	21	2	6	14	5
15	A	25	-	-	25	-	-
16	D	8	17	-	18	6	1
17	A	16	3	6	15	8	2
18	A	9	13	3	13	9	3
19	D	3	18	4	4	17	4
20	D	16	5	4	20	2	3
21	D	13	11	1	15	10	-
22	D	5	16	4	9	13	3
23	A	15	6	4	14	6	5
24	D	1	18	6	5	16	4
25	D	2	22	1	5	19	1
26	D	4	19	2	4	18	3
27	A	17	5	3	16	6	3
28	A	21	1	3	22	-	3
29	A	6	18	1	4	18	3
30	D	12	12	1	11	9	5
31	D	7	14	4	9	10	6
32	A	24	1	-	25	-	-
33	A	13	5	7	11	13	1
34	A	24	1	-	25	-	-
35	A	24	-	1	24	-	1
36	D	1	24	-	3	22	-
37	A	25	-	-	25	-	-
38	D	3	19	3	2	21	2
39	A	23	2	-	20	4	1
40	D	-	24	1	-	25	-
41	D	1	24	-	-	24	-
42	D	6	11	8	3	19	3
43	D	22	3	-	15	6	4
44	D	6	15	4	5	17	3
45	D	3	21	1	2	23	-

Table 1. (cont.)

Statement	Key	Mothers			Fathers		
		A	D	U	A	D	U
46	D	1	23	1	2	20	3
47	D	10	11	4	6	18	1
48	A	25	-	-	24	-	1
49	A	17	3	5	19	3	3
50	A	6	14	5	4	20	1
51	A	25	-	-	23	2	-
52	A	11	3	11	18	5	2
53	A	13	8	4	11	7	7
54	A	22	1	2	16	5	4
55	D	16	9	1	16	7	2
56	D	7	16	2	6	14	5
57	A	22	3	-	19	1	5
58	A	22	1	2	17	4	4
59	A	7	14	4	5	17	3
60	D	5	15	5	4	17	4
61	D	10	8	7	13	8	4
62	A	9	8	8	4	19	2
63	A	15	5	5	7	14	4
64	D	-	24	1	3	19	3
65	D	-	24	1	1	20	4
66	A	25	-	-	24	1	-
67	D	4	20	1	4	20	1
68	D	8	16	1	12	8	5
69	D	24	1	-	24	1	-
70	D	-	23	2	-	23	2
71	D	-	25	-	-	25	-
72	D	7	15	3	13	10	2
73	A	7	15	3	2	20	3
74	A	16	4	5	13	10	2
75	A	24	-	1	22	2	1
76	D	6	17	2	8	16	1
77	A	21	2	2	25	-	-
78	D	3	20	2	2	23	-
79	A	23	1	1	25	-	-
80	D	18	6	1	21	4	-
81	A	16	6	3	13	8	4
82	A	23	1	1	20	5	-
83	D	7	12	5	9	13	3
84	A	19	1	5	23	-	2
85	A	20	2	3	17	6	2
86	D	4	18	3	8	14	3
87	D	1	24	-	2	19	4
88	A	10	10	5	8	9	8
89	A	14	6	5	15	8	2
90	D	4	16	5	3	16	6

Table 1. (concl.).

Statement	:	Key	:	Mothers			:	Fathers		
				A	D	U		A	D	U
91		A		15	7	3		15	6	4
92		D		5	17	3		7	18	-
93		D		11	12	2		18	5	2
94		D		7	15	3		9	14	2
95		A		22	2	1		19	2	4
96		A		16	6	3		17	5	3
97		D		16	7	2		20	3	2
98		A		24	-	1		24	1	-
99		A		24	-	1		21	2	2
100		A		17	20	3		12	7	6

Table 2. Percentage of parental responses.

Statement	Key	Mothers			Fathers		
		A	D	U	A	D	U
1	D	92	8	-	80	16	4
2	D	8	84	8	16	64	20
3	D	16	84	4	48	44	8
4	A	88	8	4	100	-	-
5	D	12	80	8	24	60	16
6	D	16	60	24	36	60	4
7	A	84	4	12	88	4	8
8	A	52	44	4	36	52	12
9	D	4	84	12	24	60	16
10	D	48	44	8	64	32	4
11	A	72	24	8	68	24	8
12	D	20	68	12	60	28	12
13	A	26	52	12	44	56	-
14	D	8	84	8	24	56	20
15	A	100	-	-	100	-	-
16	D	32	68	-	72	24	4
17	A	64	12	24	60	32	8
18	A	36	52	12	52	36	12
19	D	12	72	16	16	68	16
20	D	64	20	16	80	8	12
21	D	52	44	4	60	40	-
22	D	20	64	16	36	52	12
23	A	60	24	16	56	24	20
24	D	4	72	24	20	64	16
25	D	8	88	4	20	76	4
26	D	16	76	8	16	72	12
27	A	68	20	12	64	24	12
28	A	84	4	12	88	-	12
29	A	24	72	4	16	72	12
30	D	48	48	4	44	36	20
31	D	28	56	16	36	40	24
32	A	96	4	-	100	-	-
33	A	52	20	28	44	52	4
34	A	96	4	-	100	-	-
35	A	96	4	-	96	-	4
36	D	4	96	-	12	88	-
37	A	100	-	-	100	-	-
38	D	12	76	12	8	84	8
39	A	92	8	-	80	16	4
40	D	-	96	4	-	100	-
41	D	4	96	-	-	96	-
42	D	24	44	32	12	76	12
43	D	88	12	-	60	24	16
44	D	24	60	16	20	68	12
45	D	12	84	4	8	92	-

Table 2. (cont.).

Statement	Key	Mothers			Fathers		
		A	D	U	A	D	U
46	D	4	92	4	8	80	12
47	D	40	44	16	24	72	4
48	A	100	-	-	96	-	4
49	A	68	12	20	76	12	12
50	A	24	56	20	16	80	4
51	A	100	-	-	92	8	-
52	A	44	12	44	72	20	8
53	A	52	32	16	44	28	28
54	A	88	4	8	64	20	16
55	D	64	32	4	64	28	8
56	D	28	64	8	24	56	20
57	A	88	12	-	76	4	20
58	A	88	4	8	68	16	16
59	A	28	56	16	20	68	12
60	D	20	60	20	16	68	16
61	D	40	32	28	52	32	16
62	A	36	32	32	16	76	8
63	A	60	20	20	28	56	16
64	D	-	96	4	12	76	12
65	D	-	96	4	4	80	16
66	A	100	-	-	96	4	-
67	D	16	80	4	16	80	4
68	D	32	64	4	48	32	20
69	D	96	4	-	96	4	-
70	D	-	92	8	-	92	8
71	D	-	100	-	-	100	-
72	D	28	60	12	52	40	8
73	A	28	60	12	8	80	12
74	A	64	16	20	52	40	8
75	A	96	-	4	88	8	4
76	D	24	68	8	32	64	4
77	A	84	8	8	100	-	-
78	D	12	80	8	8	92	-
79	A	92	4	4	100	-	-
80	D	72	24	4	84	16	-
81	A	64	24	12	52	32	16
82	A	92	4	4	80	20	-
83	D	28	48	20	36	52	12
84	A	76	4	20	92	-	8
85	A	80	8	12	68	24	8
86	D	16	72	12	32	56	12
87	D	4	96	-	8	76	16
88	A	40	40	20	32	36	32
89	A	56	24	20	60	32	8
90	D	16	64	20	12	64	24

Table 2. (concl.).

Statement	:	Key	:	Mothers			:	Fathers			:
				A	D	U		A	D	U	
91		A		60	28	12		60	24	16	
92		D		20	68	12		28	72	-	
93		D		44	48	8		72	20	8	
94		D		28	60	12		36	56	8	
95		A		88	8	4		76	8	16	
96		A		64	24	12		68	20	12	
97		D		64	28	8		80	12	8	
98		A		96	-	4		96	4	-	
99		A		96	-	4		84	8	8	
100		A		68	20	12		48	28	24	

Parent-Adolescent Relationships

Directions: The following are statements about relationships within families. Will you indicate if you agree, disagree or are uncertain of the way you feel about each one? If you agree more than you disagree, indicate by drawing a circle around A. If you disagree more than you agree, circle D. If you are uncertain how you feel, circle U.

Example: Teen-agers do not need boy and girl friends.

A (D) U

Answer shows disagree

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| 1. The father should be the head of the family. | A D U |
| 2. Parents set rules and regulations for their children so that they can show who is boss. | A D U |
| 3. Children should be taught to obey without question. | A D U |
| 4. Teen-agers want parental guidance. | A D U |
| 5. The father should be the disciplinarian in the home. | A D U |
| 6. The main reason for juvenile delinquency is that parents are not strict enough. | A D U |
| 7. After having been warned, teen-agers should take responsibility for their acts. | A D U |
| 8. Parents are more strict with their older children than with the younger ones. | A D U |
| 9. Democratic practices in the home are not suitable for most families because of the difference in the ages of the members. | A D U |
| 10. In matters of socially acceptable behavior adolescents regard the opinions of their parents more highly than those of their friends. | A D U |
| 11. Parents are too generous with criticism and too stingy with praise. | A D U |
| 12. It is the responsibility of parents to protect children from hardships. | A D U |
| 13. Parents expect too much of their children. | A D U |
| 14. The most important function of the home is to provide physical care for children until they are grown. | A D U |
| 15. One of the most important sources of great happiness is a good family life. | A D U |

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| 16. All the children in the family should have the same restrictions and privileges. | A D U |
| 17. No two children in the family ever have the same home situation. | A D U |
| 18. Jealousy between children in the same family is to be expected. | A D U |
| 19. In order to help a child develop strength of character, family members should not sympathize with him in his difficulties. | A D U |
| 20. Competition between children in the family prepares them to meet competition in the world. | A D U |
| 21. Teasing by family members will help the child learn to cope with teasing from others. | A D U |
| 22. A mother should put her children's interests above everything else. | A D U |
| 23. Some parents are jealous of their own children. | A D U |
| 24. Teen-agers should confide everything with their parents. | A D U |
| 25. Teen-agers should accept the home as it is and not try to tell their parents how it should be furnished. | A D U |
| 26. The teen-agers use of the family car should be in proportion to the amount of work he does at home. | A D U |
| 27. The person who does not get along well in his family probably will not get along well with others outside his family. | A D U |
| 28. Understanding children helps in understanding adults. | A D U |
| 29. Boys in the family are allowed more privileges than girls. | A D U |
| 30. Mothers are too easy on their children. | A D U |
| 31. Most parents pry and snoop into the affairs of their adolescent children. | A D U |
| 32. It is important that parents show trust and confidence in their teen-agers. | A D U |
| 33. Teen-agers find it easier to confide in a friend than in their parents. | A D U |
| 34. There should be mutual sharing of work and play in families. | A D U. |
| 35. The family council should be used in making decisions which involve the whole family. | A D U |

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| 36. Busy parents should not be expected to take time for the problems of teen-agers. | A D U |
| 37. When the family goes on a vacation trip the teen-agers should have a part in planning the trip. | A D U |
| 38. The mother should be the "go between" in teen-ager's relationships with their father. | A D U |
| 39. It is normal for adolescent boys and girls to want to be independent of parental control. | A D U |
| 40. Teen-agers should have the family car whenever they want it. | A D U |
| 41. A thirteen year old girl should be permitted to date steady. | A D U |
| 42. High school girls should not date boys who are two or three years older than they. | A D U |
| 43. When high school students are out for an evening parents should know just where they are. | A D U |
| 44. Dating steady insures a girl against missing school parties and social events. | A D U |
| 45. It isn't necessary that parents meet their daughter's boy friends. | A D U |
| 46. Older teen-agers should expect to take younger sisters with them on their dates. | A D U |
| 47. The standards of dating couples should be largely the responsibility of the girl. | A D U |
| 48. It is important that an engaged couple know each other's parents. | A D U |
| 49. Teen-agers need courses in family living. | A D U |
| 50. We expect boys and girls today to marry at an earlier age than did their grandparents. | A D U |
| 51. Individuals from homes in which the parents are happily married are better marriage risks than those from broken homes. | A D U |
| 52. There is a strong relationship between the length of time a couple has known each other and the permanence of the marriage. | A D U |
| 53. We expect more teen-age marriages to end in divorce than those of any other age group. | A D U |

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| 54. Individuals who have a wide variety of friends through their developmental years have a more successful marriage than those who lead more solitary lives. | A D U |
| 55. Parents should set a definite time for a person in his middle teens to return home from a date. | A D U |
| 56. It is better that a high school boy or girl have a few close friends than many casual friends. | A D U |
| 57. It is expected that adolescents will go through a period of "hero worship". | A D U |
| 58. Adolescents are expected to go through a period of "puppy love". | A D U |
| 59. The teen-ager's allowance should be large enough to cover his clothing costs. | A D U |
| 60. The size of the allowance should be determined by the amount of work the teen-ager does around home. | A D U |
| 61. It is better that a teen-ager earn his own money than that he receive an allowance from his parents. | A D U |
| 62. A teen-ager has a right to his share of the family income. | A D U |
| 63. The sixteen year old should have the responsibility of selecting and paying for his own clothes. | A D U |
| 64. The father should manage the family money. | A D U |
| 65. The mother should manage the family money. | A D U |
| 66. The parents should share responsibility of managing the family money. | A D U |
| 67. It is not necessary that the teen-ager know how the family income is used. | A D U |
| 68. The teen-ager should report to his parents how he spends his allowance. | A D U |
| 69. The most important reason for having an allowance is to teach children to manage money. | A D U |
| 70. If a man suffers a financial loss he should try to keep his children from knowing it. | A D U |
| 71. When teen-agers live at home they should give any money they earn to their parents. | A D U |

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| 72. Young people today are not as respectful of their elders as teen-agers a generation ago. | A D U |
| 73. Parents should put teen-agers on their own and then expect the best of them. | A D U |
| 74. Parents are overly concerned about the way their child's behavior will look to the neighbors. | A D U |
| 75. Teen-agers will be considerate of others if they have examples of consideration from their parents. | A D U |
| 76. As soon as boys and girls can pass the test they should be permitted to drive cars even though they are not sixteen years old. | A D U |
| 77. Teen-aged girls should not smoke. | A D U |
| 78. It is all right for teen-aged boys to smoke. | A D U |
| 79. Parents should see that their teen-agers do not attend drinking parties. | A D U |
| 80. Parents should examine the teen-agers' reading materials. | A D U |
| 81. Parents should uphold teachers' decisions regardless of their own feeling about the fairness of them. | A D U |
| 82. It is during the teen years that many of the most important decisions of one's life are made. | A D U |
| 83. Choice of vocation should be made in the teens. | A D U |
| 84. Parents should let a teen-ager follow the vocation of his own choice. | A D U |
| 85. Parents need not be concerned if a teen-ager shifts his vocational interests several times. | A D U |
| 86. Teen-agers are not capable of deciding what they want to do with their lives. | A D U |
| 87. Teen-agers cannot be trusted to make good selections in buying their clothes. | A D U |
| 88. The person who feels the need to boss is not mature. | A D U |
| 89. Timid people usually are not popular. | A D U |
| 90. Temper is an inherited trait. | A D U |
| 91. Neither shyness nor popularity is inherited. | A D U |

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| 92. Girls in their early teens should not wear make-up. | A D U |
| 93. Success in school work must be stressed at all times. | A D U |
| 94. Teen-agers are lacking in courtesy and consideration. | A D U |
| 95. Problems of adolescence have a lasting effect on personality. | A D U |
| 96. Teen-age is a period at which religious doubts occur. | A D U |
| 97. Teen-agers should attend the same church which their parents attend. | A D U |
| 98. Teen-agers feel more secure when their parents have a religion they are sincerely trying to live. | A D U |
| 99. Teen-agers need to know their parents will love them no matter what happens. | A D U |
| 100. High school students who do not attend school affairs are poor citizens. | A D U |

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| 100. High school students who do not attend school affairs are poor citizens. | A D U |

PARENTAL RESPONSE TO CONCEPTS OF PARENT-
ADOLESCENT RELATIONSHIPS

by

VIVIAN BAHR BRIGGS

B. S., University of Nebraska, 1942

AN ABSTRACT OF A THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Child Welfare and Euthenics

KANSAS STATE COLLEGE
OF AGRICULTURE AND APPLIED SCIENCE

1952

The purpose of the study was to explore the opinions and attitudes of a group of parents in relation to the concepts of parent-adolescent relationships.

The subjects for the study were rural parents of adolescent sons and/or daughters living in Kansas who, in the opinion of the committee on selection, met the requirements stated in the criteria of good family relationships established for this study by the writer. The ages of the parents ranged from forty to fifty-five. There was a wide range in the socio-economic levels of participating families. The composition of the families varied from one family with one child to two families with five children. The majority of the families would be classified as small since there were four or less children in twenty-three of the families.

A check list of one hundred statements on parent-adolescent relationships was used in the interview with each set of parents. The statements were divided among six areas: authority and discipline; family relationships; adolescent independence; allowances and family money; problems of behavior and moral belief; and, personal development. The check list was a modification of the one used by McCord in her study of the response of a group of college freshmen to the concepts of family living. Fifty statements were taken verbatim or rephrased from the McCord study. Twenty-five statements were rephrased from opinions expressed by authorities in the following books: "Family Living" by Evelyn Millis Duvall; "The Family and Democratic Society" by Joseph Kirk Folsom; "Adolescent Character and Personality" by Robert Havighurst and Hilda Taba; and, "The Dynamics of Parent-Child Relationships" by Percival Mallon Symonds. Twenty-five statements were phrased from ideas brought out in discussions which the writer held for parents and for groups

of parents and adolescents. The list was constructed so that it could be checked agree, disagree or uncertain.

The key, constructed for use in the analysis of responses, was based on the opinions of the authors whose writings were used in compiling the check list. Each statement had a key response of agree or disagree.

The responses of the fathers and mothers were analyzed in relation to the authoritative key and in relation to one another. Analysis of these data indicated that the number of mothers agreeing with the authoritative key was higher than that of the fathers on fifty-nine of the one hundred statements. The number of fathers agreeing with the accepted responses was higher on twenty-nine of the one hundred statements and the number was the same for both fathers and mothers on twelve of the statements. The number of mothers in disagreement with the key was higher than that of the fathers on twenty-eight statements whereas the number of fathers in disagreement with the key was higher than that of the mothers on fifty-four of the one hundred statements.

More mothers indicated uncertainty of their opinions in the area of adolescent independence than in any other area. On the statement, "There is a strong relationship between the length of time a couple has known each other and the permanence of the marriage," eleven mothers checked "uncertain" whereas only two fathers indicated uncertainty. On the statement, "We expect more teen-age marriages to end in divorce than those of any other age group," seven fathers and four mothers checked that they were uncertain. There were twenty-one statements about which no fathers indicated uncertainty and eighteen statements about which no mothers were uncertain.

As far as these twenty-five sets of parents are concerned the responses in the areas of authority and discipline and adolescent independence were

indicative of democratic family relationships. In the two areas of allowances and family money and of personal development the responses indicated a trend toward authoritarian family relationships. The responses were divided between democratic and authoritarian trends in the areas of family relationships and of personal behavior and moral belief. These results seem to confirm the statement that the family is a dynamic group still in a state of transition.